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Navy Integration into the Air Force-Dominated JFACC

By

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Joint Force Air Component Commander's (JFACC) mission is to execute the joint air operations plan as outlined by the Joint Force Commander's (JFC) concept of operations. This paper will examine the Navy's integration and interaction within the Desert Shield / Storm JFACC, the Joint Task Force Southwest Asia (JTF-SWA) JFACC and the JFACC for Operation Allied Force (OAF). It will show the Navy is deficient in its ability to quickly integrate into the Air Force-dominated JFACC and consequently reduces overall Joint Task Force (JTF) unity of effort and command and control. Furthermore, it specifically identifies Navy shortcomings in doctrine, training, manning, and hardware that when coupled with service parochialism hinders successful joint air operations. Lastly, it offers recommendations to correct the noted deficiencies.

## INTRODUCTION

With the passing of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, Congress mandated that the Armed Forces operate in a joint environment, develop joint doctrine, and work together more efficiently and effectively. In the past 14 years, the United States Navy has learned numerous lessons from operating jointly in a variety of military operations. As a result the Navy has attempted to improve its efficiency within the joint environment, primarily the shore based Air Force-dominated Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC), but the improvement process has been slow and difficult. The Navy still has numerous deficiencies in doctrine, training, manning, and hardware that hinder true joint integration. Additionally, service parochialism and service culture permeates a mindset that does not fully support true joint operations. Overall, Navy integration into the shore based JFACC has not been effective, especially during the early stages of an operation.

The importance of an well-integrated and represented Navy in the shore based JFACC is of extreme importance to the Joint Force Commander (JFC). The JFC needs unity of effort from all components to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of his operation. Furthermore, without a fully integrated force structure, command and control is not optimized, further decreasing the Joint Task Force (JTF) unity of effort. The Navy needs full integration in the JFACC staff, at all levels, and in every cell to properly represent itself, its desires, capabilities and limitations.

This paper will examine the Navy's integration, interaction, operation, and command and control (C2) within the Desert Shield / Storm JFACC, the Joint Task Force Southwest Asia (JTF-SWA) JFACC, and the JFACC for Operation Allied Force (OAF). It will show the Navy is deficient in its ability to quickly integrate into an Air Force-

dominated JFACC and consequently reduces the overall JTF unity of effort and command and control.

### WHAT IS A JFACC?

The JFACC concept is comprised of three fundamental areas. First, the JFACC is a person, the commander of air assets assigned to the JTF. Second, the JFACC is an organization comprised of a staff that plans, coordinates, and tracks the execution of the JTF air operation. Third, the JFACC is a process the staff employs to interact with other JTF components and support organizations in a common procedural manner.<sup>1</sup> This paper will use the term JFACC interchangeably to cover all three of these uses. It also is written from the perspective that the reader has a basic understanding of the JFACC, its inner workings, and their functions.

### OPERATION DESERT SHIELD / DESERT STORM

Operation Desert Shield / Storm was the first true modern test of joint air warfare and the JTF / JFACC concept. Within the JTF was the JFACC, headed by Air Force Lieutenant General Charles A. Horner.<sup>2</sup> Operation Desert Storm was a triumph for the Air Force-led JFACC team. The Navy initially resisted the Air Force JFACC system, with senior Navy commanders vigorously opposed to working in a joint operation especially with an Air Force general in charge.<sup>3</sup> Eventually Navy commanders realized that the JFC fully supported the JFACC and if they wanted to participate, they would need to integrate into the present system. Culturally, senior Navy leaders had a difficult time abandoning their independent *command by negation* upbringing and adopting the centralized planning process utilized by the JFACC. Furthermore, Navy doctrine and

warfighting had been developed to fight a blue water battle against the Soviets, not a littoral conflict against the Iraqi's.

Navy personnel were sent to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia to augment the JFACC staff and to act as liaison officers for their at sea commanders. A serious problem for the Navy was the lack of senior Navy leadership and representation on the JTF and JFACC staff. COMUSNAVCENT, the Navy Component Commander, remained afloat during Desert Shield and Desert Storm, denying the Navy three-star representation at the decision making hub. Navy doctrine and culture had been for the fleet commander to remain embarked during conflict. Furthermore, this individual was dual hatted, as the afloat commander and the component commander, further stretching his staff and himself as he handled a multitude of responsibilities.<sup>4</sup> A one-star representative was sent to Riyadh to act as the COMUSNAVCENT representative, but this individual was the junior battle group commander and a surface warfare officer (an aviator flag held this position from August to November 1990).<sup>5</sup> As a result of the command structure and lack of representation in Riyadh, the Navy found it difficult to affect the decisions of the JFACC staff. Liaison officers cannot replace rank and staffing on a JTF or a JFACC staff.

The Riyadh JFACC and Air Tasking Order (ATO) process revolved around joint doctrine and an Air Force methodology that was foreign to the Navy. Additionally, an incompatibility problem existed between the Air Force ATO computer system and the Navy system utilized on their ships. The Navy ships were unable to receive the ATO electronically so they sent an S-3 aircraft into Riyadh daily to pick up the ATO. The adoption of the Air Force ATO computer system, coupled with the Navy's inability to

communicate within this system, further increased the effort required to effectively coordinate command and control of the joint forces.

Another source of friction was the perception by the Navy leadership that the Air Force dominated JFACC was assigning most of the Combat Air Patrol (CAP) missions to Air Force F-15 Eagles, so they could claim the majority of the air-to-air kills. The driving forces behind aircraft selection for the CAP missions were Rules of Engagement (ROE), capability, and sustainability. The JFC and JFACC correctly requested restrictive ROE to avoid blue-on-blue, fratricidal engagements. Navy commanders were narrow minded in their view that the Air Force did this to further their own cause. The JTF / JFACC leadership was making decisions for the benefit of the joint mission, not the Air Force kill ratio.

Air Force F-15 Eagles were equipped with sophisticated Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) equipment their Navy counterparts did not have. Navy aircraft were not outfitted with this expensive gear because Navy doctrine dictated a blue water fight against the Soviets where identification of the enemy is easier and ROE less restrictive.<sup>6</sup> Thus, as a result of programmatic decisions by the Navy, the JFC correctly limited their participation on CAP missions and assigned them to the more capable Air Force units. Furthermore, it was easier to sustain the Eagles on CAP than their Navy equivalents. The F-15 carries more fuel and had to travel shorter distances to get to the CAP stations. From a JFC point of view, utilizing the F-15's as the primary CAP aircraft was an easy decision. This highlights the importance of each military service understanding that *joint* does not mean *equal*. Joint means more than one service is operating together to achieve a desired goal.<sup>7</sup> The use of assets should be based upon the rational employment of

weapons systems, taking in account capability. Mission and situation dictates which service or asset gets assigned for a specific job.

The Navy experienced a variety of operational deficiencies during the Desert Storm campaign and these detracted from the overall C2 and unity of effort for the JTF. These deficiencies were a result of policy and program decisions made inside and outside the Navy while others were a direct result of Navy parochialism, service doctrine and service priorities.<sup>8</sup>

### **JOINT TASK FORCE – SOUTHWEST ASIA (JTF-SWA)**

To monitor Iraqi aggression in the Middle East, JTF-SWA has been established, with an augmented Navy staff, to administer Operation Southern Watch (OSW) and the no-fly zone. JTF-SWA is an efficient joint organization that has had nearly 10 years of continuous operation to establish efficient unity of effort and excellent command and control.

The Navy learned many lessons from the Gulf War and one of them was to have adequate representation on a shore based JFACC staff. A Navy one-star aviator Admiral billet is permanently assigned to JTF-SWA as the Deputy Joint Force Commander (DJFC). Additionally, Navy personnel are assigned to the staff as augmentees, bringing Navy presence and knowledge to the inner workings of the entire JTF-SWA unit.<sup>9</sup> The benefit of having permanent Navy personnel assigned to a standing organization is the trust and bonds that develop between the different service members. Augmentees work for the JFC and answer directly to him and the JTF chain-of-command.

Liaison Naval Officers (LNO) are assigned to JTF-SWA from their respective units (Battlegroup, Airwing, Expeditionary Airwing) while their operations are in support of



the OSW mission. LNO's do not work for the JFC, they are outsiders that come into the JFACC to work the component issues. LNO's need to know their component commander as a result of close contact, understand the component commander's objectives, and be able to make decisions and have the confidence of their boss to speak directly for him. They need to be sufficient in number to be placed throughout the JFACC's planning and execution organizations.

JTF-SWA makes good use of the assigned augmentees and LNO's to supplement the JTF / JFACC staff. A problem with the JTF-SWA situation is the high turnover rate of individuals within the JFACC. Even with a one-star admiral as the DJFC, there is still a need for more tactical carrier aviators assigned to the staff. Occasionally, a Carrier Air Group (CAG) commander is assigned to JTF-SWA as the deputy J3, but this is the exception not the rule, and only occurs if the timing works out while the CAG is between job assignments. When a CAG is assigned to the J3 he now has the position, rank, access, and experience to educate the Air Force staff and effect changes positively for the Navy and JFC.<sup>10</sup> His interaction results in more efficient utilization of the Carrier Battlegroup and its airwing. The CAG, acting as the Deputy J3, should not get parochial and use his position to get more missions for the Navy. His job should be to accurately fill the knowledge void existing on the JTF staff, teaching his fellow staff members and accurately portraying Navy capabilities and limitations. In JTF-SWA this is an ongoing process because of the high turnover rates of all service members.<sup>11</sup>

JTF-SWA can be viewed as a success story in the JTF / JFACC concept. Some problems remain with manning and turnover since the location of the unit makes it undesirable, but these issues are being addressed. OSW is successful because a properly

trained, equipped, and motivated staff has been operating jointly for such a long time. Carrier battlegroups and personnel routinely operate there, gaining valuable corporate knowledge in joint operations while participating in OSW. Trust has been established between the services and the command and control nodes have been tried, proven and maintained. The only distracter in this successful model is that the Navy will not have several years, in most situations, to successfully integrate into a JFACC. The JFACC success presently enjoyed at JTF-SWA needs to be realized on day one of any newly formed JTF.

### **KOSOVO AND OPERATION ALLIED FORCE (OAF)**

Joint Task Force Noble Anvil and OAF were administered from Dal Molin Airbase, Vicenza, Italy and was responsible for combined military operations against Kosovo. During OAF, over 50 Navy personnel filling a variety of JFACC roles augmented the JTF staff. A Marine Corps General headed the JFACC conducting the air war in Kosovo. The USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier battlegroup, commanded by Commander Carrier Group Eight (CCG-8), encompassed Carrier Air Wing Eight (CVW-8) and provided the bulk of the Navy's offensive firepower during the air operation. The Navy had several problems expeditiously integrating the carrier battlegroup into the command and control network of the JFACC.<sup>12</sup>

The primary weakness in Navy participation in the OAF JFACC was the lack of trained personnel at the start of the operation or upon arrival of new units into the theater.<sup>13</sup> Many of the individuals receiving orders to the Joint Air Operations Center (JAOC), either as an augmentee or liaison officer, had no JFACC experience whatsoever.<sup>14</sup> These individuals did learn quickly and their efforts were extraordinary,

but there was a long period of time before they were at a level to be proficient in their tasks.<sup>15</sup> With inadequately trained individuals infused into the JFACC, the Navy's interaction within the JTF was not optimized and as a result mistakes were made and the overall command and control suffered. Additionally, senior Navy representation on the JFACC staff was missing. The senior ranking Navy person was an aviator O-6, but he was a liaison officer representing all Naval Forces assigned to the JAOC, and administratively responsible for over 50 personnel assigned to Vicenza. No Navy officer sat in the critical Battle Staff Director or JFACC flag representative watch stations where high level decisions were made.<sup>16</sup> The JFACC lacked senior Navy representation, assigned to the staff as augmentees. These individuals were needed so they could gain access to the highest level meetings and be assigned to the critical positions of the JFACC. There they could gain access to the JFACC and the decision-makers, accurately representing the carrier battlegroup, its capabilities and limitations.

Another reason for the poor initial performance of the Navy during the Kosovo air war was that the CCG-8 staff did not have a successful Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX) during their Inter-deployment Training Cycle (IDTC).<sup>17</sup> In general, there were several external reasons contributing to the poor showing of the CCG-8 staff during their JTFEX, but overall, they did not fully learn or comprehend the JFACC process.<sup>18</sup> This fact was highlighted when the USS Theodore Roosevelt battlegroup first attempted integration into the Kosovo JFACC process. The inadequately trained CCG-8 staff meshed poorly with the shore based JFACC, degrading overall command and control, and leading to an initial atmosphere of service parochialism and mistrust. Over the course of the air operation great strides were made in alleviating the friction and resulted

in a smoother running JFACC, with a well integrated Navy and CCG-8 battlegroup, efficiently operating together. The difficulty in Kosovo was that it took the Navy several weeks to effectively integrate into the JFACC, reducing the initial unity of effort and command and control.

A final area of conflict was the target assignments by the JFACC to the CVW-8 aircraft. Half of the USS Theodore Roosevelt's strike aircraft were FA-18s, that employed the obsolescent Nighthawk forward-looking infrared pod (FLIR). This FLIR restricted FA-18 target assignments because of its inadequate magnification and resolution, limiting the aircraft's ability to attack small, mobile targets.<sup>19</sup> Some Navy commanders felt the JFACC staff was assigning the premiere targets to Air Force assets when in actuality, they were assigning targets based upon aircraft capabilities.<sup>20</sup>

Programmatic and hardware choices by the Navy, not the JFACC staff's preferential treatment of Air Force assets, limited FA-18 participation in the conflict because the JFC and JFACC tasked units according to their capability. In the case of Kosovo, collateral damage was unacceptable, so very strict restrictions were placed on aircraft and aircrew for target identification.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The United States Navy has implemented significant changes to correct their mistakes made in the Gulf War, specifically, their effort to efficiently integrate into the JFACC command and control network. Hardware was added and upgraded to allow easy transmission and reception of the ATO. Joint exercises and training forums were added to train the staff's in joint doctrine and warfare. In spite of the many changes the simple fact remains that "in the next large operation involving air strikes, a mostly U.S. Air

Force staff will make decisions on the employment of theater air resources with limited Navy input.”<sup>21</sup> The present situation in JTF-SWA is acceptable from a viewpoint of Navy representation, but this took several years to accomplish. Events in the Kosovo JFACC more accurately portray the Navy’s current capabilities and limitations in integrating efficiently into a regional crisis, on short notice, with the assets on hand.

The primary method of meeting the demands of the future JFACC is through increased training. With the radical downsizing of the military, the services will be forced to operate together more frequently. Joint schooling on all levels is an absolute requirement. Presently, carrier battlegroups and their airwings receive the bulk of their IDTC joint instruction during the JTFEX. The JTFEX is essential, but earlier indoctrination in the IDTC phase is required to get all of the battlegroup personnel trained properly in joint doctrine.<sup>22</sup> Staff personnel need specialized detailing to these important billets, to ensure they arrive with the formal schooling, to positively impact the IDTC joint phase. Additionally, the staff conducting the JFACC education need to ensure the basic learning in command and control is accomplished. In the case of CCG-8, additional training requirements, above and beyond those normally required for a JTFEX, were assigned to the inexperienced battlegroups staff. Their JTFEX encompassed four major areas of concentration in command and control of air operations. With all the different objectives competing for resources, there was no possible way for all the objectives to be truly met, nor could all the data be analyzed.<sup>23</sup>

The East and West Coast Navies have adopted two different methods to address the JFACC issue. On the East Coast, Commander 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet (C2F) has assigned the JFACC mission to the C2F Naval Reserve JFACC 0186. This unit provides the cadre of trained,

experienced, and ready to deploy staff members to support any JFACC requirement in response to National Command Authority tasking.<sup>24</sup> This cell is additionally tasked with participation on assigned joint exercises and with administering the IDTC phase JTFEX's. Today the C2F Naval Reserve JFACC 0186 is still in the process of achieving its manning goal of 85%, which are approximately 65 individuals.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, only approximately 25% of these individuals are fully trained and deployable individuals.<sup>26</sup> A major concern of this reserve unit being responsible for all East Coast JFACC duties is because they are reservists. Many of them do not have the time to dedicate to the many JTFEX's that occur, less drop their civilian job and travel overseas to man a real world JFACC. This organization needs augmentation by skilled active duty personnel who can become the JFACC experts and deploy to a regional crisis as the augmentees for a shore based JFACC. Only with a properly trained and manned Navy JFACC component will it be able to meet its training requirements and crisis requirements throughout the world.

The West Coast JFACC experts reside in Commander Carrier Group One (CCG-1). CCG-1 is dual-hatted in that its personnel are not only the flyaway JFACC force for a regional crisis, but they are also the training Carrier Group for working-up carrier battlegroups.<sup>27</sup> This setup is desirable in many ways over the East Coast model, but it does not take in account the situation when the flyaway JFACC is deployed to handle a regional crisis and a carrier battlegroup is simultaneously in work-ups. Presently, the staff is insufficient in number and expertise to perform both tasks. A flyaway JFACC needed in a Kosovo equivalent operation, to augment an existing Air Force JFACC, would number approximately 60 augmentees, which would virtually render the CCG-1 staff ineffective in conducting battlegroup IDTC operations.<sup>28</sup> The CCG-1 concept is

valid, but to ensure smooth operations at all times, additional personnel need to be added to the staff.

The bottom line with preparedness for future JFACC's is that the Navy has a flyaway JFACC staff, ready to deploy to anywhere in the world, at a moments notice, to either form a Navy JFACC or augment an Air Force JFACC. This unit must be properly trained, manned, and equipped to quickly respond to crisis. Additionally, there must be sufficient people left behind to continue the other missions of the organization, namely training of the carrier battlegroups and participation in joint exercises. The infrastructure for this to occur is in place in the East Coast C2F Naval Reserve JFACC 0186 and the West Coast CCG-1. However, both of these organizations require augmentation in manning, training, and equipment to properly perform this mission.

The final area of focus for the Navy to operate more efficiently within the JFACC is in the procurement of hardware. Theater Battle Management Core System (TBMCS) is the follow-on system to Contingency Theater Automated Planning System (CTAPS). Doctrine for its use and training for the users needs to begin now, before the Navy has problems receiving the ATO on ships again. Additionally, programmatic and hardware deficiencies (FLIR, IFF Interrogators) in warfighting assets leave the Navy at a disadvantage when vying for the coveted missions of an air campaign. The JFC and JFACC will pick the most capable asset to perform the required mission. If the Navy asset is not the most capable platform, then it will be regulated to a secondary or supporting role. It's not parochial when a JFC picks the most capable platform to perform a mission, its optimization of his assets to complete his task.

## CONCLUSION

Eventually the Navy positively contributed to the joint effort of all three JFACC's cited in this paper. The biggest detractor from this effort has been the excessive amount of time the Navy has taken in figuring out the best method to effectively integrate into the command and control network of the respective JFACC. The Navy must be prepared to positively integrate into a JTF / JFACC on day one of its formation. To do this the Navy must improve in four specific areas. First, it must assign its finest, most capable leaders to the key positions on an Air Force dominated JFACC staff. These individuals need to have had the proper training, formalized schools, and career path to enable them to excel in this joint environment. Second, system hardware and software (weapons, sensors, TBMCS, C2 nodes) must be procured, upgraded, and maintained to allow seamless integration into any joint operation. Third, Navy personnel and their units must increase their participation in joint training exercises to gain experience operating jointly and to better understand joint doctrine. Fourth, Navy service parochialism and service culture must be eliminated. The needs of the JTF and its mission supersede any need of an individual service, individual unit, or individual commander.

Once the Navy adopts these recommendations, the shore based JFACC will no longer be Air Force dominated. The JFACC will truly become *joint*, with robust representation by a well-integrated Navy. This will lead to improved command and control and true unity of effort for the entire JTF.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Forbes, "Implementation of the JFACC Concept, the Maritime Perspective." A Royal Navy Brief.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey E. Stambaugh, "JFACC: Key to Organizing your Air Assets for Victory." Parameters, Summer 1994, 98.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>4</sup> James A. Winnefeld and Dana J. Johnson, "Joint Air Operations, Pursuit of Unity in Command and Control, 1942-1991." (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 1993), 113.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>7</sup> P. Mason Carpenter, "Joint Operations in the Gulf War, An Allison Analysis." (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1995) 18.

<sup>8</sup> Winnefeld, 114.

<sup>9</sup> Authors observations from five months deployed on USS George Washington, in the Persian Gulf, in support of OSW. Additionally, the author spent five weeks of this deployment assigned to JTF-SWA as an LNO, representing CVW-1.

<sup>10</sup> William Gortney, CAPT, USN, Deputy J-3 JTF-SWA, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Electronic Mail Interview 16 January 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Authors observations from five-week assignment to JTF-SWA as an LNO representing CVW-1 and the USS George Washington battlegroup.

<sup>12</sup> JFACC could be referred to as a Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC) due to the combined nature of the Kosovo air operation. Author will utilize JFACC for consistency throughout this paper.

<sup>13</sup> Robert E. Paladeau, "After Action Report for Duty at the CAOC During the Kosovo Air Campaign." August 1999, 20.

<sup>14</sup> JAOC could be referred to as a Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) due to the combined nature of the Kosovo air operation. Author will utilize JAOC for consistency throughout this paper.

<sup>15</sup> Robert E. Paladeau, "After Action Report for Duty at the CAOC During the Kosovo Air Campaign." August 1999, 21.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>17</sup> Robert E. Paladeau, "CCG-8 JTFEX JFACC Afloat ATO Production After Action Report – Observations and Recommendations." March 1999, 13.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Boyle, LCDR, USN, CVW-8, Norfolk, Virginia, Telephone Interview 29 January 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Robert E. Paladeau, LCDR, USNR, Naval Reserve C2F JFACC 0186, Telephone Interview 28 January 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Robert L. King and James C. Wilson, "JFACC and the Navy: Something is Missing." Proceedings, October 1999, 71-72.

<sup>22</sup> James C. Wilson, Center of Naval Analyses representative assigned to Tactical Training Group Atlantic, Telephone Interview 7 January 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Robert E. Paladeau, "CCG-8 JTFEX JFACC Afloat ATO Production After Action Report – Observations and Recommendations." March 1999, 15.

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- <sup>24</sup> Second Fleet Naval Reserve JFACC 0186 Mission Statement.
- <sup>25</sup> Commander Second Fleet JFACC Standup Update Brief, March 1999.
- <sup>26</sup> John Nankervis, CDR, USNR, Naval Reserve C2F JFACC 0186, Telephone Interview 11 January 2000.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Robert E. Paladeau, LCDR, USNR, Naval Reserve C2F JFACC 0186, Telephone Interview 28 January 2000.

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